Ukraine's Anarchists - What Now?

Pay Parity Strike: Educational Welfare Workers

UMANITA' NOVA
QUOTIDIANO ANARCHICO
L'Umanità Nova che verrà!

A Look Back at Italian Anarchist Daily from 1920

BLACK STAR

UKRAINE

"Україні потрібна революція!"

'Ukraine needs a revolution!' was the cry of Ukrainian anarchists in 2016, and little or nothing has changed since then. The increasing build-up to war in Ukraine has been super-charged by the same oul' nationalist shite from both the imperialist Russian regime run by Putin and the flag-waiving right-wing Ukrainian 'patriots' of Zelensky's government.

As the Russian state mobilised troops in 'support' of two newly 'recognised' Republics, effectively (re)partitioning the Ukraine, the west is busy dressing up it's own imperialist ambitions as humanitarian concern.

Naked imperialist ambition, greed, warmongering, mobilisation, threats and more threats continue to add fuel to the fire while most poor working class inhabitants of the Ukraine also face exorbitant increases in heating bills, greater jobs precarity, and increased poverty. More and more people's homes are without heating or power as the region lurches closer to a war that is not in their, or our, interests.

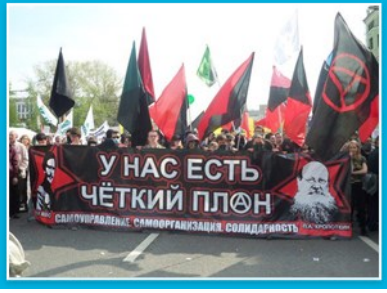
Over-arching it all, of course, are the geo-politics of the international boss class whose 'new Cold War' demonstrates yet again the truth of the saying that war is the health of the state. Fuck 'em all!

'In Ukraine, we have a very big myth about Makhno…he's considered a nationalist… because, well, he fought the Bolsheviks, therefore he must be for Ukraine'

'Power gives birth to parasites, long live anarchy' - slogan on Makhnovshchina flag (below)

Власть рождает паразитов. Да здравствует Анархия!

ACT or Автономна спілка трудящих (Autonomous Workers' Union), was the last version of a number of Ukrainian anarchist groups which dissolved around 2018. Caught in the welter of protests against the puppet regime of Yanukovych and repression which followed in Maidan, in Kiev, anarchists struggled to differentiate themselves from the right-wing nationalists and fascists opposed to Russian aggression and the authoritarian left and their pro-Moscow line. Class struggle anarchists in Ukraine remain divided on the way forward.



NIPSA STRIKES 24-25th February

Workers with the Northern Ireland Public Services union are taking strike action over 24-25 February as part of their continuing dispute against the lack of pay parity for Education Welfare Officers. Despite being qualified social workers, EWOs are paid substantially less than other social workers, a position which Stormont have allowed to develop over many years now.

Social workers employed by the Health and Social Care trusts are all paid more than the EWOs who work for the Education Authority. Despite renewed talks after strikes at the start of this month with officials and politicians, there has been no movement. Wee Robin Swann's promises of a bounty of 3 per cent for staff, as well as falling miles behind the current inflationary rises and general cost of living crisis (aka, the usual capitalist assault on the working class), really highlights the distance between them and the workers.

UCU STRIKE

It's round two for the lecturers' union as well at the minute. Renewed strike action over pensions and the 'Four Fights' (pay, casualisation, workloads and race, gender and disability pay gaps), has led the University and College Lecturers' Union (UCU), to call staggered actions across UK universities beginning on 14 February through to 2 March.

Having pretty much used up strike funds in the last round of pension strikes (2018-19), the union is asking workers to only claim if they are struggling on lower pay grades. UCU's General Secretary 'earns' about £150,000 a year (which, in fairness, is a bit of a cut from the last gaffer who took home around half a million quid all in). Many lecturers and research associates starting out in higher education can expect to make about £22,000 a year, with New College, Oxford recently looking to hire a lecturer in history for £19,000 a year.

Public perception, of course, is that working at a university is a plum job with high rates of pay, when in reality, the sector has been increasingly staffed by temporary contract workers, many of them students working on PhDs (because they cost less, sometimes half as much, as 'internal candidates' than hiring externally). The rise in PhDs has, in itself, been driven by a marketisation strategy to recruit and churn out doctorates thereby pushing institutions up the league tables. The fees regime, especially the market for international students, has seen universities awash with money and ever-increasing salaries for senior managers, and yet, pay freezes, continued casualisation, bullying, workload increases, and inequalities are rife. Pensions are important for some, but there are so many more pressing, and oppressing, issues at stake.

As a fairly typical bourgeois union, the UCU's strategy is far removed from the lives of the workers it represents with only a willingness to take strike action continuing to make them relevant, though how long that will continue remains to be seen.

TESCO Ireland threatens security staff

I used to know a fella who worked in supermarket security and to be honest, he's the last bloke I'd be making threats against, but TESCO in the Republic of Ireland are outsourcing their security to private firms and saying anyone who doesn't like it can effectively fuck off and find another job!

Here in the North, we've had private security wrestling pissed teenagers to the floor at closing time for years with a bunch of wankers known as Amberstone who pay minimum wage for the pleasure.

Amberstone hit the headlines in 2019 when on losing the security contract with ASDA, they deducted £220 from each worker for security licences. A group called 'ONE Veterans', a Free State charity helping their makey-up army, very much on the lines of 'Help for Heroes', has been advertising Amberstone opportunities in Dublin recently which may signal their move into Tesco, that's if the workers are willing to take it.

Time for an arm up the back and a kick up the arse for the bosses, we say!

UMANITA' NOVA

QUOTIDIANO ANARCHICO

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Direzione e Redazione: Via Goldoni, 3 - MILANO Amministrazione: Casella Postale 91

L'Umanità Nova che verrà!

On 26th February 1920 the anarchist daily 'Umanita Nova' was launched with a print run of 50,000.

"a mild name, almost evangelical, out of tune, some say, with the quick breath of a society in turmoil, with the jolting events, the threat of violent action and the bold daring of this time that we live in. [....] Umanità Nova! : it embraces the full meaning of our highest hopes, and it sets a path to follow without fail. [....] We are setting out for the inevitable. The revolution is no longer a dream; libertarian communism is an achievable goal; the anarchic ideal is no longer a utopia. The cry of the masses, pouring from the workshops, and the salt of endless, fertile fields, represents the greatest human protest against secular human suffering; Spartacus is about to break his chains; many consciousnesses will rise to renew the world. Umanità Nova, the supreme goal of all our battles and our pain, we adopt you as a shining symbol of a living vision, and we raise you up to the masses, to all our hearts, to the lantern and the flag of light and freedom." Nella Giacomelli .

Meanwhile in Ballymena...

So Girvan resigned, and the Assembly collapsed, or it didn't. Or perhaps it did... Viva Irlanda del Norte sin gobierno!

Meanwhile one Ballymena couple have been preparing for the worst. Robert and Natasha Templeton, under the influence of a persuasive pro-Brexit 'end times' pastor urging his flock to stockpile food, went one further.

Expecting the materialisation of said 'end times' Rab and Natasha had been stockpiling ammunition and material for making their own homemade explosives.

Global capitalism does seem intent on destroying the planet, combined with some heady preaching perhaps prepping isn't altogether unexpected.

We'd much rather folk started preparing to take on capital and the state, at work, in our communities, globally. That isn't done with a bible and a copy of *US Army Improvised Munitions Handbook!*

Organise!

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Get Involved: Help Build An Anarchist Alternative.

Organise! is an anarchist political group in Ireland who take inspiration from the self directed struggles of working-class people, particularly those organised on anarcho-syndicalist lines. Our history goes back to the original formation of Organise! by the Ballymena and Antrim Anarchist Groups in 1985.

We are a small group of ordinary working class people who are fed up with being fucked about by the profit system, fed up with seeing our communities torn apart by racism, patriarchy, nationalism and sectarianism, and sick of a greedy few getting rich off everyone else's backs.

We are actively working to promote solidarity in opposition to capitalism, the state, patriarchy and all other forms of oppression and hierarchy. The way we organise reflects the free society we want to create: one based on voluntary association, democratic participation and self-management.

Our members are workers, claimants, students, migrants, unemployed and other working-class people committed to building a libertarian communist union movement actively opposed to all forms of oppression and exploitation.

We want to improve everyday conditions for ourselves and other working class people, but we also struggle for the revolutionary transformation that can create a free and equal society, one based on mutual aid and co-operation. Sound crazy? Maybe it does, but in an era in which it is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism the continuation of the present system is even crazier…

The current system isn't working – stress and overwork affect more and more people while others are flung on the dole; for increasing amounts of workers it is precarity, zero hours contracts and the stress of being unable to plan or budget our lives; we live in a world of plentiful resources yet millions starve; some people make vast fortunes just because they own companies, land, property or natural resources, but those of us who create the wealth, work the land and build the properties are left struggling to pay for the natural resources; politicians tell us there's no money – not for wages, benefits or local amenities, but there's always plenty for war; both locally and globally the gap between the richest and the poorest sections of society has never been so great; instead of a war on poverty they've got a war on 'benefit fraud', while the same system that creates war, poverty and environmental destruction stigmatises, imprisons and deports the resultant refugees.

We don't think these things are inevitable or coincidental, we think they are related to capitalism – an economic system defined by wage slavery and the accumulation of profit out of other people's work. So we support all workers against their bosses in demanding higher wages and better conditions. We try to intervene practically to support workers engaged in disputes and are also active in our own workplaces and communities. Not only against exploitation but against the multiple oppressions faced by members of the working class in all our diversity.

But it's not just a question of trying to struggle by in a world of exploitation and oppression; we look to a future where workers control production and society in their own interests. And unlike some people who claim to oppose capitalism, we don't want to be a new set of leaders and we refuse to be led by anyone else. We advocate direct democracy in the workplace and through the commune in our communities – working in federation to ensure that the needs of all are met and that no-one is ever again in a position to oppress or exploit another human being.

If you are interested in these ideas, we'd encourage you to explore the website and consider getting involved.

We currently have members in Belfast, Cork, Derry, Lisburn, Newtownabbey and Portadown and are building the organisation on the basis of active involvement and participation. We aren't interested in meaningless 'paper' membership so you can't join by filling in an online form and bunging us a few quid.

To talk to us about joining get the ball rolling, check out our website at https://organiseanarchistsireland.com and send an email to:

organiseasi@gmail.com